



Managing Weed and Seed

Chapter 6. Managing Weed and Seed

Overview

This chapter focuses on successfully managing the Weed and Seed Steering Committee as it oversees the implementation and operation of the site's strategy. Each Weed and Seed site has unique characteristics that reflect local needs and resources; however, each site is called on to address similar issues at some point in its development. There is no single answer that fits everyone's situation; consequently, the ideas in this chapter are suggestions or options to be used and adapted as needed.

The chapter discusses policy-level decisionmaking responsibilities, day-to-day operational issues, and oversight and monitoring of activities. Although no proven model exists for managing a Weed and Seed Steering Committee, many successful sites offer solutions from which to draw on. Weed and Seed emphasizes the importance of local control; therefore, management-level activities should be developed to maximize resources and meet local needs.

Vision

The Weed and Seed Steering Committee makes decisions, develops policies, and guides implementation of the site's strategy to establish a healthy, stable, and crime-free neighborhood. The Steering Committee—by collaborating with law enforcement, social service agencies, community-based organizations, churches, and local businesses—empowers residents to effect positive changes in the neighborhood and, more important, to sustain those changes.

The inclusive nature of Weed and Seed should result in a Steering Committee that represents

all segments of the community. All committee members should share a vision for the community, despite differing approaches to solving problems. They can achieve more by working together than by working independently. The Steering Committee should be the driving force in reaching the goals identified in the site's strategy.

Implementation Process

Step 1: Establish an Organizational Structure

Most Weed and Seed sites have found that using subcommittees is an effective means of distributing the workload. The subcommittees could reflect the four component areas—law enforcement; community policing; prevention, intervention, and treatment; and neighborhood restoration. Another configuration might be two major subcommittees—a Weeding Committee and a Seeding Committee. The structure should be developed to reflect local needs and resources.

Each subcommittee should include community stakeholders, residents, and representatives from the Steering Committee. Steering Committee involvement helps ensure effective communication among the subcommittees. The use of subcommittees also provides the opportunity to broaden participation and introduce others to the Weed and Seed process.

The subcommittee is a comfortable format in which to discuss critical, and sometimes contentious, issues. The subcommittees help ensure that different voices are heard and various points of view are discussed. Smaller committees are not only less intimidating but also encourage better discussion among members.

Reports from subcommittee meetings should be presented to the Steering Committee with recommended action, when appropriate. This procedure will help to keep Steering Committee meetings more focused and productive. However, this should not be used to restrict discussion at Steering Committee meetings. It is still important that Steering Committee members understand the issues.

Step 2: Develop an Action Plan for Each Subcommittee

Identify specific tasks for each priority

A subcommittee is most effective when it concentrates its efforts on specific goals. With this approach, the subcommittee can also accomplish interim tasks while working toward a major goal.

Example

Priority: Attract new businesses to the community.

Task: Make the neighborhood more attractive.

Activity: A series of neighborhood cleanups, which will contribute to reaching the goal.

Identify available resources for accomplishing the goals

As part of your neighborhood assessment, resources were identified that can be used for various activities related to each subcommittee's goals.

Example

Task: Develop neighborhood support for goals.

Activities: Bring youth and adult residents both together to work on the cleanup, which accomplishes the immediate task and builds stronger ties in the neighborhood. Get assistance from other stakeholder agencies to assist with the cleanup.

Develop a timetable for activities

Having a timeframe for activities energizes people. It is difficult to maintain enthusiasm when activities seem to go on endlessly. It is easier to sustain interest when work is broken into short periods.

Example

Task: Establish a schedule for the cleanup event.

Activity: Arrange for food, prizes, and media coverage.

It may be a long time before businesses start coming into the neighborhood, but interim activities can keep residents actively involved and feeling positive about the goals.

Step 3: Develop Open Communication Among All Parties

Open communication is important to the successful operation of your Weed and Seed strategy. People like to feel they are on the "inside"; they do not like to be the last to know what is going on. You need to find a simple way to communicate not only with Steering Committee members but also with other stakeholders, residents, EOWS, and interested parties.

Identify how and when people want to receive information from your Weed and Seed site. This not only gives you ideas about what methods to use but also will ensure some involvement from members in developing a communication network. Your community policing partners may be able to help with this task. If they have a standard method of communicating with residents, you could ask to be included in the arrangement.

Find out how other partner agencies reach their constituencies, and try to develop a way to share with them. Doing this also provides a way to strengthen your collaboration efforts with these agencies.



Your EOWS program manager can help you devise a good communication strategy and can provide a schedule describing what information is needed and when it should be submitted.

Identify ways to get your information to the media, your local elected officials, State officials, and your representatives' and senators' offices.

1. Tell your Weed and Seed story. You have things to be proud of, but no one will hear about them if you do not get the word out.
2. When you have an event, notify the media. In case they do not show up, have a camera handy, take pictures, and submit them along with a short story to your newspaper.
3. When you have an event, invite the local elected officials. Let them have an opportunity to get some credit for your success—you can win by sharing the good news.
4. Send information (story and pictures) to your congressperson's office. If you provide information regularly, you will get a better reception when you call on him or her for assistance.
5. Develop a short presentation about Weed and Seed that can be presented at meetings of local service clubs, such as the Rotary Club, Lions Club, and Chamber of Commerce. These organizations have frequent meetings

and are always looking for speakers. Use these opportunities to tell the Weed and Seed story.

Not everyone is effective with these communication techniques; however, you may be able to identify a Steering Committee member who can take on these responsibilities. This is also a great opportunity to expand your supporters by finding someone to assume this particular responsibility and train someone to assist.

Step 4: Establish a Consistent Procedure for Securing Weed and Seed Staff

Although most of the work at a local Weed and Seed site is accomplished by volunteers serving on the Steering Committee or subcommittees, paid staff are also an important part of the operation. The process for filling staff positions varies from one site to another. In some sites, the local grantee organization assigns someone to administer and manage Weed and Seed operations. This may be the police department, another department of local government, or a nonprofit agency. Under this arrangement, it is especially important to establish a clear line of reporting authority and responsibility. If a staff person is paid by the grantee organization and reports to both that organization and the Weed and Seed Steering Committee, he or she may feel torn between the two entities. Regardless of

the hiring arrangement, the Steering Committee is responsible for approving the staff that will be working with Weed and Seed.

Develop a job description, with clearly defined duties, that is agreeable to both the grantee organization and the Steering Committee. (See sample position descriptions at the end of this chapter.)

Step 5: Develop a Process for Steering Committee and Subcommittee Meetings

Much of the work of the Weed and Seed committees is done during meetings: policy decisions are made, oversight of the operation is reviewed, and stakeholders are informed of the issues. Good attendance at these meetings is essential to the continued success of Weed and Seed; therefore, careful attention should be given to the structure of the meetings. The following are components of a good meeting:

- Meetings should be scheduled at a convenient time and location in the neighborhood.
- Meetings should begin on time. If people have to wait each time they meet, more of them will arrive late or stop coming altogether.



- A quorum for the meeting should be established in your bylaws and enforced evenhandedly.
- A prepared agenda, developed with input from members, should be sent before the meeting, if possible. At the least, an agenda should be ready at the beginning of the meeting.
- Reports—programmatic, financial, and from the subcommittees—should be presented to the Steering Committee regularly.

Whatever format you select for your meetings, keep in mind that the meetings should be productive. If members feel they are wasting their time, they will stop attending. Once attendance falls, it is difficult to reenergize the group. Because almost everyone in today's society feels pressure to cover their personal and professional responsibilities, they have to make choices about how to spend their time. They are not willing to waste it on nonproductive meetings.

Step 6: Develop a Process for Team Building

Weed and Seed's success depends partly on bringing the Steering Committee together to work as a team with a shared vision for the community. Being a team does not mean there will be no differences but that you can work through them. Mutual respect and a willingness to listen to other points of view are necessary for people to work together effectively.

The following are ways your Steering Committee can promote team building:

1. **A shared vision.** The Steering Committee should have a sense of common purpose, be focused on the future, and see change as an opportunity for growth.
2. **Strong bonds.** Steering Committee members need a strong sense of commitment to the Weed and Seed mission and vision.

3. **Clearly defined roles and responsibilities.** Steering Committee members should have a sense of ownership and feel responsible for the site's performance. Stakeholders must be kept informed and involved.
4. **Effective meetings.** Meetings should be focused on achieving results and accomplishing tasks.
5. **Decisionmaking strategies.** The Steering Committee must have a decisionmaking strategy that is effective and inclusive.
6. **Effective communication.** A climate of openness and trust among Steering Committee members is necessary for successful operation.
7. **Appreciation for the synergy created by diversity.** The Steering Committee should appreciate the effects of culture, ethnicity, gender, age, personality, and education on each individual's views.

Step 7: Provide Training and Technical Assistance

People do not always come to their Steering Committee duties fully prepared to assume their responsibilities. Although they have the commitment and concern for the neighborhood, they may not have been asked to perform the policy-setting and decisionmaking responsibilities that they are now facing.

Training and technical assistance are delivered primarily to staff who are responsible for day-to-day site operations. Whereas staff training is important, providing assistance to Steering Committee members, stakeholders, and residents is also important. These key decisionmakers are the most essential component in your Weed and Seed site. The following are recommendations about training and technical assistance:

1. Provide training on local resources. Encourage partner social service agencies to make presentations about their services.
2. Ask law enforcement officials to make a presentation about their role in Weed and Seed.
3. Use the training and technical assistance available from EOWS. EOWS schedules sessions throughout the year on various topics. You may also request assistance tailored to your particular needs.

Do not hesitate to seek help, especially during the startup phase of your Weed and Seed operation. The training and technical assistance available from EOWS is an important advantage of becoming an Officially Recognized site.

Implementation Issues

Diversity, which is the strength of the Steering Committee, may present challenges to a smooth working relationship on the committee. The different roles and responsibilities of volunteers and staff must be defined. A good working relationship between the grantee and the Steering Committee must be developed.

Sustaining Positive and Permanent Changes

In this chapter, we discuss operational issues, day-to-day management, and individual responsibilities. These components are necessary not only for a Weed and Seed site to operate initially but also to sustain its success and expand its reach. The overall goal of sustaining positive and permanent changes in the neighborhood can best be accomplished through strong collaborative arrangements, teamwork, and good management.

Exhibit 6–I. Weed and Seed Management Plan

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Committee/Person	Handles	Meets
Weed and Seed Executive Committee (with current membership of 7)	Policy, public relations, fundraising	Quarterly
Weed and Seed Steering Committee (with current membership of 47)	Protocol, program planning, administration	Quarterly
Weed and Seed Program Subcommittees Law Enforcement Subcommittee (expanded) Community Policing Subcommittee (expanded) Prevention/Intervention/Treatment Subcommittee (expanded) Neighborhood Revitalization Subcommittee (expanded)	Strategy implementation, procedures, program evaluation	Bimonthly
Weed and Seed Program Management Committee Law Enforcement chair Community Policing chair Prevention/Intervention/Treatment chair Neighborhood Revitalization chair United Way assistant executive director	Day-to-day management, linkage of weeding and seeding activities	Monthly
Weed and Seed Coordinator <i>works with</i> Family center Community policing staff Safe Haven Weeding partners Seeding partners	Ongoing referrals, onsite supervision, and information management	As necessary

Exhibit 6–2. Program Coordinator Position Description

This is an example and can be modified to meet the needs of a particular site.

Position: Weed and Seed Program Coordinator

Location: This position will be housed at [location]. It is expected that the incumbent will work weekends and evenings during the operation of the Safe Haven Center.

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Position Summary:

This is a full-time position responsible for coordinating the [city] Weed and Seed Program. This position will be responsible for coordinating the activities of organizations and agencies that have committed services, volunteers, and contributions to the operation of the Weed and Seed program. The coordinator will primarily report to the Weed and Seed Steering Committee, with direct supervision provided by [title].

Job Duties:

- Coordinate schedules of program volunteers.
- Recruit service providers and participants to the Weed and Seed Program.
- Work with organization on intake and assessment of program participants.
- Pursue additional sources of funding for the Weed and Seed Program, including working with agency staff to pursue grant sources and grant writing.
- Collect data on program activities and participants.
- Report design and writing on program activities, accomplishments, and evaluation.
- Work evenings and weekends during the hours of program operation.
- Work with and at times represent agencies involved in program implementation, e.g., [provide examples].
- Draft policies and procedures for the operation of the Safe Haven Center for the Weed and Seed Steering Committee.
- Be knowledgeable of all levels of law enforcement including local activities related to community-oriented policing activities.

Exhibit 6–3. Site Supervisor Position Description

This is an example and can be modified to meet the needs of a particular site.

Position: Site Supervisor

Status: Full Time

Hours: Daily: 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: 12 noon to 5 p.m.

Location: Weed and Seed Office

Reports to: Weed and Seed Program Manager

Basic Function: To assist the [city] Weed and Seed Program with the development of Safe Havens in target areas. This entails coordination, support, and program promotion in each building as well as the strategic planning and utilization of the Safe Havens by the residents in the target areas.

Specific Responsibilities:

- I. Set up a system and manage the Neighborhood Center and Safe Havens.
 - Greet individuals, identifying their reason for coming and providing a welcoming and comfortable environment, and referring them to the appropriate service, person, or materials.
 - Develop spaces within each facility that will be a comfortable and inviting environment for the residents to access for peace, quiet, and comfort.
 - Foster community involvement in the targeted areas.
 - Coordinate projects with various agencies and the community education staff.
 - Recruit and market the Safe Haven concept, including to agencies and the respective police departments.
 - Manage recruitment and staffing needs as they pertain to the Safe Haven operation.
 - Identify appropriate services to operate within the Safe Havens.
 - Publicize services of the Safe Havens to potential clients and residents.
2. Broker clients to appropriate agencies and social service agencies.
3. Be responsible for various projects and identify sources to assist in project completion.
4. Serve as an advocate of the Weed and Seed program.
5. Interact and offer exchanges with other Weed and Seed sites.
6. Discern and evaluate various community interests.
7. Communicate data, activity reports, and attendance figures to the Weed and Seed Program Manager.